(c) Air India is taking steps to intensify its marketing efforts, augment capacity, reduce non-operating costs and to improve its product, image and on time performance.

**Promotion of Tourism in Uttar Pradesh**

1750. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR :
DR. BALIRAM :

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the steps taken by the Union Government to promote tourism in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) the names of the places in Uttar Pradesh where Government have decided to construct tourist spots during the last two years; and

(c) the progress made in this regard, so far?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) to (c). Promotion of tourism and implementation of tourism projects are primarily the responsibility of the State/Union Territory Governments. However, the Department of Tourism Government of India, extends financial assistance to the State/Union Territory Governments on the basis of specific project proposals received, based on their merits, inter so priority and availability of funds.

The Department of Tourism, Government of India, has provided financial assitance for the following ten projects which are in different stages of implementation by the State Government : 1. Meditation Centre at Sarnath. 2. Visitor's Centre at Sarnath. 3. Development around Chaukhandi Stupa. 4. Floodlighting of Varanasi Ghats. 5. Restaurant-cum-waiting hall, Sravasti. 6. Restaurant-cum-waiting hall, Kushinagar. 7. Restaurant-cum-waiting hall, Pallia. 8. Floodlighting of Council House at Lucknow. 9. Yatri Niwas at Chitrakot. 10. Sound and Light at Agra Fort.

*[English]*

**Setting up of Telecom Authority of India**

1751. SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY
SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT
SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state

(a) whether the Union Government have cleared the Telecom Authority of India Bill;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith functions and composition thereof;

(c) the time by which the Bill is likely to be introduced;

(d) whether the Punjab, Haryana, Delhi Chamber of Commerce and Industry requested to review the said Bill; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (e). The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Bill, 1996 has been introduced on 23.7.96 in the current Session of Parliament. No such representation has come to notice.

**Mining Lease**

1752. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether some private sector multinational companies have been granted mining lease in different States;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the norms fixed therefor; and

(c) the period for which the mines have been leased out?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (c). Mining Leases are granted as per the provisions of Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 and Mineral Concession Rules, 1960. As per provisions of the Act Mining leases can be given only to Indian Nationals or to a Company as defined under sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Companies Act, 1956. Section 8 of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 requires that the minimum period for which a mining lease may be granted should not be less than 20 years while the maximum period of the lease should not exceed 30 years.

**Special PDS Cards**

1753. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have decided to target 62.4 million families living below the poverty line for a special ration card scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the approximate cost likely to be involved in implementing the above scheme; and